



HINTS FOR LADY EQUESTRIANS.

NUMBER I.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "HORSEMANSHIP."

RIDING on horseback has become so fashionable an amusement, of late years, that every lady is now presumed to know something about it. Persons, who have had little opportunity for practice, are frequently deterred from riding, supposing that it will be impossible for them to succeed. But all that is required is some share of confidence, and the following of a few rules, which can be imparted in print, as well as orally: and these we shall now proceed to state. By following these suggestions any lady, with a little practice, will be able to ride not only with safety, but gracefully.

The most desirable height of a lady's saddle-horse is fourteen and a half or fifteen hands, though a variation of half a hand over or under is allowable. He should possess the most beautiful shape and figure, the highest breeding, the best condition, and a good mouth. It is also necessary that he be perfectly well broken to the saddle; and, though his temper should be gentle, he should have a due share of mettle, for nothing can be more unseemly than the application of the whip by a lady.

A horse that stumbles, starts, or shies, should never be mounted by a lady, no matter how well experienced she may be in the art of riding. When it is convenient, a lady should always ride the same horse. By this means the rider and the horse become accustomed to each other's habits, and a mutual confidence springs up, which makes the exercise more pleasant to both.

It is necessary that the saddle should sit easy on the horse's back. When the tree is badly shaped, or the pad illly constructed, the horse's back will chafe

by the motion of riding, and he will become so restless as to make the rider insecure in her seat.

The large flap or skirt of the saddle should be soft and pliable, and a large square cloth should be placed underneath, to prevent the habit from coming in contact with the horse's side. The best material for the saddle-cloth is coarse, unbleached linen.

Before the lady mounts, it should be ascertained that the saddle is securely girthed. To render the position of the saddle still safer, a broad sursingle should be passed around it, and a good crupper and foreband should never be omitted.

The bridle should be of fair leather, have double reins, and, under all circumstances, be provided with martingals.

When a lady rides a suitable horse, she will have no occasion to use a whip; but it is, nevertheless, proper that she should carry one.

Before attempting to mount a horse, the rider should satisfy herself that her cap is well secured to the head, and the hair properly adjusted, so that it cannot be disarranged by the motion of riding. When the hat falls from the head, in riding, the horse is very apt to start, or even run away; and should it be prevented from falling to the ground by means of the fastening under the chin, the action of the rider in endeavoring to replace it, is almost certain to alarm the horse. The hair too, by being carelessly dressed, is apt to fall over the face, and prove a source of great annoyance.

Generally it is safer and better for a lady to mount from a stile, or other similar structure, than to subject her escort to the unpleasant task of elevating her by

the feet, from the ground. When the mounting is to take place from a stile, the rider should previously place herself upon it, holding her skirt in such a manner as to enable her to seat herself with the greatest possible ease. The escort should lead her horse to the side of the stile—the near side of the animal approaching as closely as the nature of the ground will permit. The saddle being brought to the side of the lady, and the reins placed in her right hand, she throws herself into the saddle, the escort meanwhile holding the horse by the bit, to prevent him from prematurely starting. The assistant now places the lady's left foot in the stirrup; and she, by pressing her right hand upon the off crotch of the pommel, and her left foot upon the stirrup, elevates her body sufficiently to enable herself, or her attendant to arrange the skirt of her habit in its proper position.

When mounting is to be made from the ground, the process is difficult; and if the lady be not expert at it, the gentleman will have trouble in elevating her to the saddle. Mounting from the ground should not be practised when it can be avoided; but as it sometimes is the only feasible method, the following directions will be found useful.

The lady having gracefully gathered up the skirt of her habit, approaches the horse, when the groom gathers the reins with his left hand, smoothly and evenly, the bit-reins between and somewhat tighter than the bridoon, properly dividing them with his forefinger. The lady receives them a little more forward than the point of the horse's shoulder, with her right hand, which still retains and passes the whip over the saddle to the off side. On taking the bridle in this manner, her forefinger is placed between the reins; the groom removes his hand, and the lady draws hers back, suffering the reins to glide gently and evenly through her fingers, until she reaches the near crotch of the pommel, which she seizes with her right hand, still holding the whip and reins, and places herself close to the near side of the saddle, with her back turned almost toward it. The groom

now quits his former post, and prepares to assist her in mounting. The horse being thus left under the lady's government, it is proper that, in passing her hand through the reins, she should not have suffered them to become so loose as to prevent her, when her hand is on the pommel, from having a light but steady bearing on the bit, and thus keeping the horse to his position during the action of mounting. The groom then joins his hands by interlocking the fingers, and stoops for the lady to place her left foot in them. After placing her foot firmly in the groom's hands, the lady lays her left hand on his right shoulder, and straightening her left knee, she bears her weight on her assistant's hands, which he gradually raises (bringing himself erect at the same time) until she is seated on the saddle. During her elevation, she steadies, and even (if necessary) partly assists herself toward the saddle by her hands, one of which, it will be recollect, is placed on the pommel, and the other on her assistant's shoulder. It is important that she should keep her foot firm, and her knee steady. If these directions be attended to, she will find herself raised to her saddle, with but trifling exertion either to herself or to her assistant.

Having reached the saddle, while her face is turned to the near side of the horse, and before she places her knee over the pommel, the assistant puts the lady's left foot in the stirrup, while she removes her hand from the near to the off crotch of the pommel, preparatory to elevating her body to have her riding habit adjusted properly.

The reins are to be held in the left hand. Some ladies separate them by the third and fourth fingers: others by one of these fingers only; and many by the fourth and little fingers, but the greater number use the latter alone for this purpose, passing the off or right rein over it, and bringing the near or left rein up beneath it. The reins are carried, flat upon each other, up through the hand, near the middle joint of the forefinger, and the thumb is placed upon them, so that their ends fall down in front of the knuckles.

THE STARS.

BY C. C. VAN ZANDT.

In the azure arch of Heaven
Stars are keeping watch to-night,
Fleecy clouds, by light winds driven,
Sailing on their silvery light;
And I think, as far in ether
I behold the moon's great shield,
They are flowers the angels wreath her
Culled from earth's deserted field.

Flowers that once have loved to linger
In the world of human love,
Touched by death's decaying finger
For a better life above;

Oh! ye stars! ye rays of glory!
Gem lights in the glittering dome!
Could ye not relate a story
Of the spirits gathered home?

Ye have seen life's wearied sailor
Sink beneath the storm-ploughed main,
Do your beams grow never paler?
Are not dews the tears ye rain?
When my dearest hopes are broken,
And my world in darkness lies,
Still shine o'er me as a token
Of the land beyond the skies.